

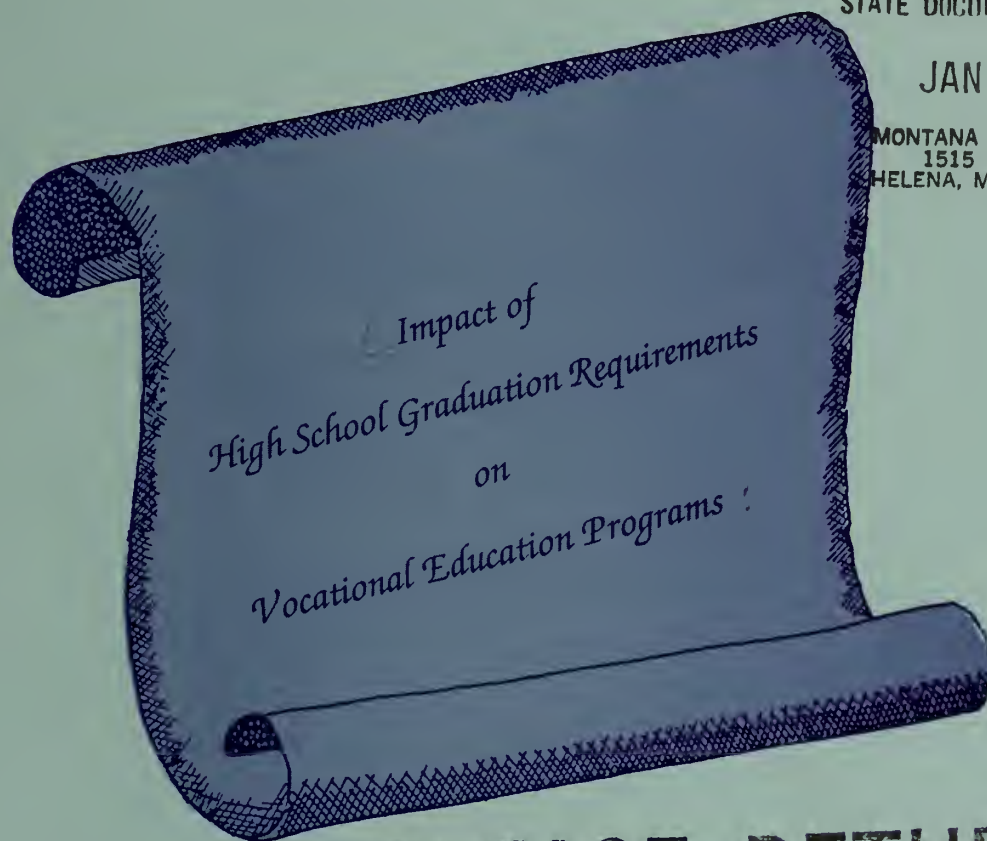
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Impact of high
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MONTANA COUNCIL ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

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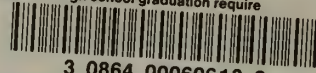
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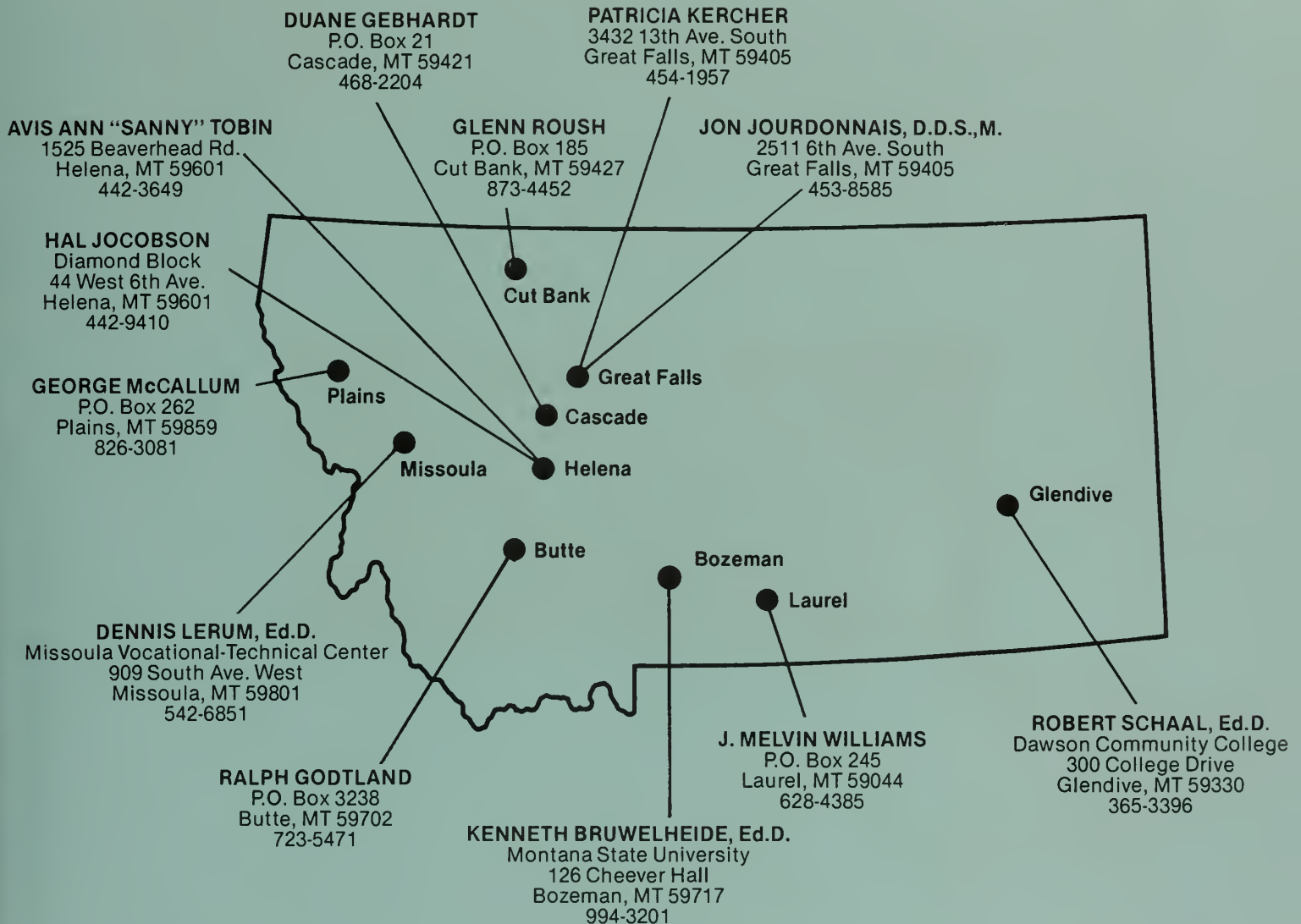
1987
PUBLIC HEARING

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The synopsis of comments in this publication were taken from the presentations made by participants at the public hearing in Bozeman, October 16, 1988, and were edited by the Council staff.

MONTANA COUNCIL ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

1987 — 1988



For a transcript of testimony
offered by each participant
or a video tape of the hearing,
please contact:

Jim Fitzpatrick, Executive Director
Executive Management Building
1228 - 11th Avenue
Helena, MT 59620
444-2964

PURPOSE OF THE PUBLIC HEARING

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act (P.L. 98-524) requires that "the public is given an opportunity to express views concerning the vocational education program of the State." To fulfill this requirement, the Montana Council on Vocational Education conducts a public hearing annually to collect information to provide valuable insight on current issues in vocational education. Recommendations provided by those making presentations are a valuable source of topics for council discussions, research efforts, and recommendations to the State Board of Education.

Public Hearing 1987 was held in conjunction with the Montana Vocational Association State Leadership Conference at Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana, Friday, October 16. Representative J. Melvin Williams, Council Chairman, presided at the hearing, extended greetings, and introduced the members of the Council. Glenn Roush, Chairman of the Council Communication and Coordination Committee introduced the speaker and Dr. Dennis Lerum, State Council member, introduced panel members and served as moderator.



INTRODUCTORY SPEAKER

Dr. Max Amberson, Professor, Head
Agricultural and Industrial Education
Montana State University

PANELISTS

Jeff Dietz, Principal
Billings Career Center

Ted Hazelbaker, Member
Board of Public Education

Bea McCarthy, Member
Board of Regents of
Higher Education

Charles F. Curtis
Executive Vice President
Tele-Tech Corporation

Peggy Arnott, President
Montana Association of
Home Economics Teachers

Paul F. Cole, Member
New York Council on
Vocational Education

SYNOPSIS OF SPEAKER AND PANELISTS COMMENTS



Dr. Max Amberson

Professor, Head, Agricultural and Industrial Education,
Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana.

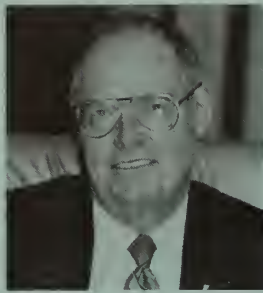
Dr. Amberson stated, "Historically, the standards as recommended by the Board of Regents which our students must meet by 1990 came about as the result of . . . three things: they were interested in improving the quality of students; wanting to reduce the amount of remedial work; and wanting to reduce the number of freshmen dropping out of the university system." He also reported since 1980, 45 states and the District of Columbia have changed high school graduation requirements with an average of 17 units required in 1980 and increasing to an average of 19.7 by 1987. His survey of five larger and medium-sized schools show reduced enrollment in home economics programs. Five smaller schools were surveyed and reported the regent's standards have reduced vocational education enrollments at the freshman level. Dr. Amberson reported on interviews with OPI vocational education specialists and stated, "There have been decreases in enrollment in vocational classes throughout the state . . . There's disagreement . . . whether the Board of Regent's recommended standards . . . have been the primary cause, or whether Montana Regents are really reflecting national trends . . ." Dr. Amberson said it appears enrollments in academic subjects will increase while enrollments in other areas such as vocational education, art, music, and physical education may go down. Dr. Amberson stated he felt the most important thing is for parents and taxpayers to receive the correct information on the changes to clarify their values and reflect those back through the various boards and institutions.

Jeff Dietz

Principal, Billings Career Center



Mr. Dietz set forth four goals he recommends for high school education today. They are: to develop in students the capacity to think critically and communicate effectively through a mastery of language; to have students experience a core curriculum which focuses on interdependence and common human experience; to prepare all students for work and for further education; and to help students develop social and civic consciousness. "High schools must provide the basics and provide the electives which can lead students to both careers and education." He stated increased admission requirements will result in students being tracked, partly due to expectations and influence of parents, teachers, counselors, and peers. Neither the college-bound or non-college-bound students will have the benefit of electives to prepare them to participate as productive members of society. He said education after high school for most Americans will occur in community colleges and industry-sponsored training programs so teachers must show the non-college bound as well as the college bound how to continually update their education. Mr. Dietz stressed that ". . . high school graduation requirements must include career planning and vocational preparation."



Ted Hazelbaker

Member, Board of Public Education

Mr. Hazelbaker presented a review of what's required for high school graduation in Montana. He said for at least the past 10 years, a high school senior in Montana needed 16 credits to graduate. In 1988 a student will need 18 credits and in 1989 he'll need 20 credits. Mr. Hazelbaker said no change was made in either the specific course requirements nor the basic education definition. The only things required are more electives and 40 percent of the credits required can come from vocational education programs. "High school graduation requirements as changed for 1988 and 1989 do impact vocational education programs, but if properly understood and applied, impact those programs in a very positive way." He stated the college admission standards will have a negative impact on vocational education programs, if they are not well thought out. The Board of Public Education has undertaken an examination of the standards that hopefully will have identified some competencies that students should have when they graduate as opposed to simply "seat time" that is now required. Mr. Hazelbaker said the board understands that vocational education is one of the basics of education.

Bea McCarthy

Member, Board of Regents of Higher Education



Bea McCarthy said the primary force behind changing the graduation requirements in Montana has been the State Board of Public Education, not the Board of Regents. Mrs. McCarthy reported the Board of Regent's study of college entrance requirements is related to the financial constraints which necessitated concentrating resources in areas of greatest need for the most good, and to look at ways to prepare students for the 21st century. Mrs. McCarthy anticipated that 80 percent of the jobs in the future will require some education beyond high school. By requiring additional courses, she feels educators are contributing to the life-long learning process of students. Throughout the United States, high school graduation requirements are on an uphill move, according to Mrs. McCarthy. She said all students are in more rigorous academic programs. The world that these students are going to be a part of is also continually changing and education must keep pace. She stated, "... that by increasing academic requirements for all students there's a potential of closing program opportunities for some students." She pointed out it is the State Board which requires 20 credits for graduation, leaving five elective course choices to the student. Mrs. McCarthy reported proposals for credit earned from selective vocational programs to meet some requirements is being studied.



Charles F. Curtis

Executive Vice President, Tele-Tech Corporation

Charles Curtis said students entering the work force need to know the practical things that they learn in high school. He feels an engineer has to be able to design a piece of equipment, through training he gets at the university, but he also needs to be able to take that design and visualize it in its final form. Mr. Curtis said his company looks at people's training and that practical down-to-earth approach to be able to take a design and be able to use it. "If we get a resume in and the guy has only his transcript from college, he's got all "A"s and nothing else, we're not real interested in that sort of engineer. "A"s are fine, but we want to know what he can do with his hands." Mr. Curtis said the people he hires need to use their head, to organize their work, to read and follow instructions, and the ability to assemble units with the kind of quality expected.

Peggy Arnott

President, Montana Association of Vocational
Home Economics Teachers



Peggy Arnott feels the recent increase in academic requirements ignores the needs of high school students who do not plan to go on to college and who purposely choose a vocational program. She stressed one of the primary concerns as academics are increased should be the drop-out rate. On the east coast where these requirements have been in play, schools are experiencing very high drop-out rates. She feels we need to consider the costs of not educating a student. "There is a great deal of purpose and training behind vocational education. Vocational education has many youth organizations that provide for civic, social and personal responsibility among students to their community. Decreases in vocational course enrollments are a direct reflection of what's happening with increased academic course requirements." She said we are narrowing our focus to solve our education woes by increasing academics rather than providing a total program for students. Ms. Arnott stressed the need to provide a diversity not just more of the same, to increase excellence. Motivating students not only to do better but in many cases to remain in school is a critical task of education. Ms. Arnott feels vocational education is frequently the catalyst that reawakens the commitment to school and it must be a significant part of high school education.



Paul F. Cole

Member, New York Council on Vocational Education

Paul Cole said when New York increased its academic requirements, there was a rather severe enrollment decline in vocational programs. He said a lot of students in vocational programs did not pass competency tests required for graduation and they were scheduled into remedial programs so they had less time for vocational classes. Vocational education is delivered in three ways in New York, according to Mr. Cole. In the comprehensive high school, area vocational centers and Board of Cooperative Educational Services, or BOCES. The BOCES, in addition to having vocational and technical training, are the centers that provide special education for students with a variety of handicaps. He said many students got the idea that BOCES are for students that have lesser ability and wouldn't attend them. There were also problems in terms of cost and recruitment. Mr. Cole said the Board of Regents in New York are beginning now to look at how to address the problems of declining enrollment.

SYNOPSIS OF AUDIENCE COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

How Will Graduation Requirements Change by 1989?

- Total number of credits required for high school graduation by the Board of Public Education in 1988 is 18, in 1989, it will be 20 credits.
- Of the 18 credits, students can choose three electives and of the 20 credits, they are allowed to choose five (electives may be vocational education courses).
- Board of Public Education standards now require 16 credits, including four years of English, two of social science, two of math, two of science, one of health and physical education, one fine arts, one practical arts, and two electives.
- School boards are going to require graduation requirements that meet the Board of Regent's requirements. They will not be in a situation where a student receives a high school diploma, decides to go to college, but needs more credit to be accepted.
- Vocational education could become part of basic education and could be defined as such in the foundation program.

Will Vocational Education Class Enrollment Be Limited?

- Enrollment is limited in vocational education classes because of the need to complete the requirements.
- Many students are so busy trying to meet expanded requirements for college acceptance they don't have an opportunity to learn the skills they need for life.
- Parents want their children to go to college and want them to prepare by taking the required courses.
- Many students are not college material, but they don't take vocational classes, because they are too busy meeting the college entrance requirements.
- It is impossible for students planning to go to college to take vocational education classes. Reductions in the freshman vocational education programs are most significant this year.

What is the Role of Secondary Education?

- It shouldn't be a college preparatory step stone—80 percent of students entering college drop out.
- The majority of students who drop out of college end up in the world of business and need the skills to get by in the work force.
- You can get all the academic excellence you want, it is what happens in the classroom that really counts.
- Practical application of knowledge is important—knowledge you can't use isn't worth anything.
- Students should be prepared to enter the army, vo-tech centers, and business schools, without being encumbered by the Board of Regents requirements which the local boards incorporate.

Could Vocational Classes Be Substituted for Requirements?

- Vocational education courses could be substituted for some of the required courses, for example, accounting could be substituted for some of the math requirements.

- Local school boards can look inside their programs to see where they can possibly "slide" some vocational classes into their programs.
- Flagging some of these vocational courses in would be a bandaid approach to the problem.

What is Happening to the Students?

- Eighty percent of high school students want to go to college, but only 20 percent should.
- By requiring college prep courses, we are putting students into the fabric of our society basically unprepared to do what business and industry expects of them.
- What happens to the 70 to 75 percent of students who are taking college prep classes, then drop out, and haven't taken any vocational education classes? Many go into \$3.50 an hour jobs selling hamburgers or clerking in a store.
- Community colleges get the older students on the rebound—they are untrained and nobody needs them—average age of students at MSU is 23 and Northern Montana College is 27.
- Are we not producing educated idiots that have no practical skills?

1987 PUBLIC HEARING SURVEY RESULTS

There are several general conclusions that can be drawn from a review of the Public Hearing surveys returned. A total of 40 surveys were returned from the 60 sent to participants and following are some of the responses:

- Speaker and panel were beneficial.
- Hear from additional groups and individuals—members of the Board of Regents, industry members and its representatives.
- Not sufficient time allowed for questions and comments from audience.
- Limit the amount of time allowed for each person to speak.
- Hold another day of hearings.
- Written report be prepared on the hearing to distribute to appropriate publics.
- Video tape of the hearing should be available for interested parties to view.
- Conduct another hearing on the same subject in a central location where a variety of audiences could be targeted.
- 78% of the participants responding indicated they would attend another hearing on the topic.

MCVE COMMENTS:

Basically, the testimony presented at this hearing concentrated on the impact of graduation requirements **and** college admission requirements on vocational education programs. Because of the positive feedback and interest from participants, the State Council is planning a second public hearing in Glendive.

PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

DATE: Saturday, April 16, 1988

TIME: 9:30 A.M.

PLACE: Ullman Center, Dawson Community College, Glendive, Montana

TOPIC: "Impact of High School Graduation Requirements on Vocational Education Programs"

Public comment is invited.

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Vocational Education
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Helena, MT 59620

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